

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 01514 011158Z

43

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /111 W

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R 282033Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5491

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1514

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR, BR, CU, OAS,

SUBJ: VIGNES MEETS PRESS AFTER MEXICO MFM

1. SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH PRESS FOLLOWING MFM VIGNES
RESTATED GOA POLICY RE CUBA CAREFULLY AVOIDING SEVERAL
OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE SWIPES AT US. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT EZEIZA UPON HIS RETURN FROM
MEXICO LOCAL PRESS QUESTIONED FONMIN VIGNES AT LENGTH ON THE
RESULTS OF MFM. BELOW ARE HIS RESPONSES TO MOST SIGNIFICANT
QUESTIONS.

3. ON THE GENERAL QUESTION OF RESULTS OF THE MEETING POSED
SEVERAL TIMES BY NEWSMEN VIGNES MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:
A) IN GENERAL THE MEETING WAS A SUCCESS FOR WHICH THE FONMINS
SHOULD CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES; B) WHILE THE CONFERENCE DID
NOT IN CONCRETE SENSE SOLVE US-LA ISSUES, IT WAS FIRST TIME
LA HAS SOPKEN WITH ONE VOICE ON HEMISPHERIC PROBLEMS. THE LONG
PROCESS BEGUN IN MEXICO WOULD CONTINUE IN ATLANTA AND SLOWLY
CONCRETE RESULTS WOULD EMERGE.

4. ON SEVERAL QUESTIONS RE ISSUE OF CUBA TRADE, BRAZILIAN
FONMIN BARBOSA'S REMARKS ON SUBJECT, AND ATTEMPT BY ONE NEWSMAN
TO INTERPRET SECRETARY KISSINGERS REMARKS THAT US HAD NOT DECIDED
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 01514 011158Z

LICENSE ISSUE AS INTERVENTION IN GOA AFFAIRS, VIGNES AVOIDED

TEMPTATION TO SCORE CHEAP PINTS AND OPTED FOR CALM, MEASURED REPLIES. VIGNES FIRMLY REPEATED GOA POSITION THAT COMPANIES IN ARGENTINA ARE SUBJECT TO ARGENTINE LAW AND THUS TRADE ISSUE IS MATTER OF INTERNAL DECISION AND NOT ONE OF FOREIGN POLICY. VIGNES DID MUCH TO REDUCE IMPACT OF BRAZILIAN FONMIN BARBOSA'S ALLEGED STATEMENTS ON CUBA ISSUE BY STATING HIS BELIEF THAT PRESS ACCOUNTS OF STATEMENT WERE "NOT THE TRUTH". ON US STATEMENT RE DECISION TO PERMIT FIRMS TO SELL TO CUBA VIGNES NOTED THAT IT IS BOTH COMMON AND PROPER FOR GOVTS TO CONSIDER A COMMON ISSUE WITHOUT INFRINGING ON EACH OTHER'S SOVEREIGNTY.

5. VIGNES, IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S QUESTION, DENIED THAT GOA WAS PLAYING A MEDIATOR ROLE IN US-CUBAN RELATIONS.

6. TO QUESTION AS TO WHETHER SEC. KISSINGER HAD OBSERVED PROTOCOL IN CALLING ON VIGNES AT HIS HOTEL, VIGNES REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE. HE GAVE NO DETAILS ON WHAT WAS DISCUSSED WITH SECRETARY AT MEETING.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS ENCOURAGED BY VIGNES PERFORMANCE AND BELIEVES THAT HE HAD INDEED, ESPECIALLY BY DEFUSING BRAZILIAN FLAP, PLAYED POSITIVE HEMISPHERIC ROLE HE TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH HE WOULD PLAY. HOWEVER, POSITION SHIFT IN US-GOA RELATIONS AND FAVORABLE ARGENTINE DISPOSITION TO US IN OAS NOTED BY DEPT WOULD REVERSE ITSELF IF GOA TRADE WITH CUBA LEADS TO US-GOA CONFRONTATION. ON THIS SUBJECT, SEVERAL NEWSMEN HAVE REPORTED TO US ECONMIN GELBARD'S BRIEFING STATEMENT TO THEM THAT ARGENTINA HOPES TO AVOID ANY PROBLEM WITH US ON MATTER BUT WILL INSIST THAT ARGENTINE COMPANIES (INCLUDING US SUBSIDIARIES) OBEY ARGENTINE LAW. GELBARD REPORTEDLY COMMENTED THAT CAR SALES TO CUBA WILL GO AHEAD ONE WAY OR ANOTHER NO MATTER WHAT US DECIDES RE LICENSING, ADDING THAT GOA RELUCTANTLY WILLING TO GO AS FAR AS NATIONALIZATION OF COMPANIES IF NECESSARY TO ENFORCE LAW AND UPHOLD ARGENTINE SOVEREIGNTY.

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